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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/857,258	09/14/2001	Isao Nakatani	20010701A	3393

513 7590 05/12/2004

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WASHINGTON, DC 20006-1021

EXAMINER

VINH, LAN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1765

DATE MAILED: 05/12/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

AS

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/857,258	NAKATANI, ISAO	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Lan Vinh	1765	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 April 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 5-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 5 and 7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 6, 8 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 9/14/2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 1765

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 12/19/2003 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Douglas (US 5,122,225) in view of Yu (US 6,605,541)

Douglas discloses a selective etch method. This method comprises etching an interconnect layer 34 of a material comprising titanium/metal (col 4, lines 38-40), flowing an etchant containing dry etch reactants of nitrogen oxide and ammonia into a plasma etch chamber to etch the metal layer (col 8, lines 9-29)

Douglas differs from the instant claimed invention as per claim 5 by etching a metal layer of titanium instead of copper.

However, Yu, in a method for manufacturing semiconductor, discloses that a layer of conductive material may be aluminum, copper or titanium (col 4, lines 58-59)

Since fig. 34 of Douglas shows that the layer 34 connecting the active areas 14 and 16, one skilled in the art would have found it obvious to substitute Douglas's titanium layer with copper in view of Yu teaching because according to Yu, if a layer is to form conductive line from one active area to another, the layer would typically be a conductive metal such as titanium, aluminum or copper (col 4, lines 62-65)

4. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Douglas (US 5,122,225) in view of Yu (US 6,605,541) and further in view of Nguyen et al (US 5,821,169)

Douglas as modified by Yu has been described above. Regarding claim 7, Douglas discloses forming a mask material layer of silicon dioxide to protect/cover the surface of layer 34 (col 4, lines 58-61)

Douglas as modified by Yu differ from the instant claimed invention as per claim 7 by forming a mask material of silicon dioxide instead of titanium

Nguyen, in a method for forming interconnect, discloses that silicon dioxide or titanium are suitable material for hard mask/mask (col 14, lines 55-60)

Hence, one skilled in the art would have found it obvious to modify Douglas and Yu by using titanium material as a mask in view of Nguyen teaching because Nguyen discloses that the hard mask material is silicon dioxide or alternately the hard mask material is a conductive material such as titanium (col 13, lines 58-60)

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 6, 8 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Regarding claim 6, no cited prior art of record discloses dry etching a metal surface of copper, silver, gold using an etching gas containing: nitrogen oxide, ammonia and hydrogen sulfide.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 5, 7 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lan Vinh whose telephone number is 571 272 1471. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nadine Norton can be reached on 571 272 1465. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



LV
May 10, 2004